

Jefferson Transit Authority Board
Meeting Minutes
Tuesday, March 17, 2009, 1:30 p.m.
Port Townsend Fire Station
Port Townsend, WA

CALL TO ORDER/WELCOME

The Meeting was called to order by Jefferson Transit Authority Board Chair David Sullivan at 1:32 p.m. Other members present were John Austin, George Randels, Phil Johnson and Catharine Robinson.

STAFF PRESENT

Dave Turissini, Leigh Kennel, Carla Meyer, Van Church, Mike Pollack, Rachel Katz

CAC PRESENT

Linda Pfafman
Ali Dyche
Brenda McMillan
Peg Furey
Cammy Brown
Martha Ann Sackett

OTHERS PRESENT

Jeff Chew, Peninsula Daily News
Pam Thompson, Jefferson Transit Operator
Carl Thompson, Jefferson Transit Operator
Eldon Burrow, Jefferson Transit Operator
Burt Langsea, Jefferson Transit Operator
Greg Prescott, Jefferson Transit Operator
Suzy Church
Laura Martin
Judy Bernal
Craig Lohner
Janice Barbeau
Caroline Culbertson
Jay Bazuzi
Margaret Lee
C.E. Pierce
[first name illegible] Pierce
Ron Gregory
Edna Forker
George Forker
Ila V. Gluhm
Larry Carter
Kendall McKee
Craig Durgan

Edel Sokol
Bob Sokol
Doug Rathbun
Lars Johannessen
Scott Hopson, KOMO-TV
Bryan Johnson, KOMO-TV
Jon Eden
Melanie Lockhart, Port Townsend Leader
Cass Peters

CITIZENS ADVISORY COMMITTEE/AUTHORITY BOARD MEMBER REPORTS

Linda Pfafman reported that the issue of term limits was revisited and the membership voted against them. Four people are coming to the end of their terms and one will definitely not be continuing. One of the other three submitted an application for reappointment by the deadline. Fare increases were discussed and out of county fares were narrowly approved by the membership.

Robinson requested for both the Board and Citizens Advisory Committee votes that dissenting votes are identified in a split vote. Board members commented that the application and reapplication process should be unified and happen at the same time.

NEW AGENDA ITEMS

**Public comment period will occur after the public hearing
Move 5 b. and c. before 5a.**

Motion by Randels, second by Robinson to delete from the agenda item 7a. Proposed Moratorium on Public Service Signs on Buses.

Discussion: the issue could still be discussed even if it is not on the agenda. Some board members are of the opinion that Jefferson Transit has a policy even if it is not written. Randels commented that it is an issue of free speech and he doesn't want to give up his right to free speech. Turissini reported that Public Service Announcements are driven by Jefferson Transit's ad content policy. **There was a call for the question. The motion passed 4 – 0 with Sullivan abstaining.**

PUBLIC HEARING

The public hearing began at 1:45 p.m.

b. Resolution 09-06: Adopt Transit Development Plan 2009 – 2014

Kennel explained what the Transit Development Plan (TDP) is and how it is used in transit systems statewide and at Jefferson Transit in particular. It has been reviewed by the Citizens Advisory Committee, and two additional items have been added as a result of that review regarding the identification of funding for local TV and print media marketing and to identify and market links between transit and trails for bicycle riders and hikers. Kennel explained that the TDP is instrumental in identifying projects for the next six years that will need funding assistance.

Discussion: p.6 - "all citizens" needs clarification and more specificity. Kennel explained that the narrative is written in general terms to take advantage of any funding opportunities that might fall outside of a specific definition of Jefferson Transit's passenger base.

Randels suggested adding "within our service area where mandated and seeks to provide where feasible" in reference to special needs transportation.

Discussion: Robinson would like more education at the board level about ACCT and the Coordinated Human Service Plan.

Discussion: Page 8 - "reducing single occupancy vehicle use" – clean up language, and add a bullet point regarding employer incentives to use transit. Turissini suggested an item that would involve working with the Climate Action Committee on a transportation goal to help further the objective of reducing Single Occupancy Vehicle (SOV) use in Jefferson County.

Discussion: p.12 - "add park and ride improvements where possible" – needs clarification. Kennel explained that this item came from a suggestion from the Citizens Advisory Committee, for enhancing a park and ride with mixed use applications. The location of the park and ride is intentionally not specified.

Discussion: p.20 - Does the projected 6 year budget in the TDP include planned fare increases? Church explained that the projected revenues going forward were planned to be fairly conservative. The hearing was opened to public comment.

- Brenda McMillan commented that the TDP is a masterpiece.
- Cammy Brown agreed.
- Margaret Lee asked if public rest rooms would be available at the Visitors Center at the Haines Place Park and Ride. Turissini explained that they would be when final details are worked out with the Chamber of Commerce.

Public comment was closed.

Motion by Robinson, second by Johnson to adopt Resolution 09-06: Adopt Transit Development Plan 2009 – 2014. The motion carried unanimously.

c. Resolution 09-07: Amend 6-Year State Transportation Improvement Program

Staff report: Kennel explained that the STIP tells the federal and state government what kinds of funding Jefferson Transit would be interested in for capital projects. The STIP is an online reporting function and is a companion to the TDP. Turissini reported that we will be receiving funding for two large and two small transit coaches as part of the stimulus package, funded at 100%.

The hearing was opened to public comments.

- Larry Carter stated that his wife used to ride Jefferson Transit to work at PSNS. She had to stop riding because she was allergic to another person's perfume, and was hospitalized twice because of it. He asked what has been done about that, and he seeks a better solution than Mrs. Carter having to drive a single occupancy vehicle to work at PSNS.

Public comment was closed.

Motion by Randels, second by Johnson to adopt Resolution 09-07, amending the State Transportation Improvement Plan to reflect State and Federal Funding related to Jefferson Transit's 2009 – 2014 Transit Development Plan. The motion carried unanimously.

a. Resolution 09-05: Approve Fare Change

Staff report: Turissini reported that the proposed fare change is a strategy to help balance the budget. He reported on last month's presentation and reviewed changes made since then.

Comments received by staff from the public and CAC members mostly concerned the price of monthly passes and the out of county surcharge, as well as a concern for potential confusion and/or fare disputes.

Discussion: the reduced fare monthly pass increase is 60% compared with other monthly passes at approximately 20%. Turissini explained that that action had been made to make the percentage of increase consistent across the board based on a ratio determined by daily fares.

The hearing was opened to public comment.

- Cammy Brown commented on rate increases and cutting service. The amounts of the proposed fares are odd and should be rounded up or down to be easier on passengers. This puts a lot of pressure on the drivers as well, as they do not carry change. Brown stated the out of county surcharge will be confusing to passengers, who will find it easier to drive their cars, now that gas prices have gone down. She also raised the issue of how payment will be made. She thinks some riders will not have the extra money. It would help if passengers could use checks or debit cards to pay for passes. She asked if the surcharge would be worth the negative impact in the current unstable economy.
- Brown also commented that service cuts should be considered temporary until the economy stabilizes. She has heard that Jefferson Transit is planning to cut service because the neighboring transit systems are cutting service, and this sends a negative message.
- Ali Dyche commented that there should be a fare increase but not an out of county surcharge. Only Sunday service should be cut at this time, followed by an assessment of the financial situation. Additional service cuts during the week and an out of county surcharge will be too much for the riders at one time, and will put off potential new riders. Fare increases will deter riders, especially as gas prices have decreased.
- David Woodard buys a monthly pass and recommends that staff implement an annual pass.
- Jay Bazuzi stated that in his ideal world transit would be free. He stated that paying a bus fare of \$1.50 is complicated and recommends a base fare of \$2.00.
- Janice Barbeau lives in Marine Plaza and states that half the residents there ride the bus and all are very low income and would not be able to afford a fare increase.
- Caroline Culbertson expressed appreciation for being able to attend and allowed to speak. She is a senior on a restricted income, and stated she will have difficulty paying a higher fare. She is not satisfied with the justification for raising fares for seniors and people with disabilities and believes they should be exempt.
- Margaret Lee commented that she has no objection to fare increases if they are equitable and affordable. She objects to a 60% increase on reduced fare monthly passes. She also reiterated the difficulty in obtaining a one-way fare.
- Jon Eden commented that two trips to Sequim or to Poulsbo represent a 100% increase over the current fare.
- David Woodard asked if the fares will be changed again when the economy improves.
- Brenda McMillan commented on service levels. She stated the proposed service cuts are not adequate within the city of Port Townsend. Most of the cuts occur in service leaving Port Townsend and more should be made on local service within Port Townsend.

The hearing was closed to public comment at 2:22 p.m.

Discussion: fares and fare boxes. Staff explained that Jefferson Transit does not accept payment in any form other than cash or checks. More sophisticated, card-reading fare boxes were explained, as was the price tag for them, which is approximately \$10,000 per fare box, plus supporting infrastructure.

Discussion: Do we have options for income level. Turissini explained that there is no sliding scale and the reduced fare is based on age and/or disability.

Austin requested comment from Transit Operator Pam Thompson regarding the fares. She doesn't have a problem with the amount, but objects to the surcharge. She anticipates an increase in fare disputes and general complaints. She suggested another option to include pass sales at locations that will accept a credit or debit card, as it would be difficult for some people to produce the cash to buy a pass from the driver. Randels added the Visitors Center as a possible point of sale for passes.

He also likes the idea of easy one-way fares and an annual pass. He also commented on the out of county surcharge, saying it must be in place in other transit systems. Meyer explained how cumbersome it became when it last was used in Jefferson County. Mike Pollack commented that a simplified fare system helps preserve Jefferson Transit's excellent safety record. Kennel suggested implementing an out of county surcharge only when passengers get on the bus outside Jefferson County.

Recommendations from board for follow-up action by Staff for the next meeting:

Research places to buy passes (groceries, major stops with retail)

Projected revenue – change reduced monthly pass to \$12.00 and increase full fare pass to \$25.00

Projected revenue - \$1.00 surcharge for each trip traveling from Jefferson County to another county, and for those boarding out of county coming in to Jefferson County.

Randels explained the rationale behind development of the proposed fare structure, which was based on balancing the ratio (3:2) between daily and monthly fares.

CONSENT AGENDA

- a. **Approval of Minutes, February 17, 2009**
- b. **Approval of Expenses, February 2009**
 - Operating checks 85128 - 85197: \$221,475.47 (includes payroll of \$132,244.15)
- c. **Resolution 09-08: Approval of Bid Award for Lodging Services During Hood Canal Bridge Closure**
- d. **Resolution 09-09: Approval of Bid Award for Security Services During Hood Canal Bridge Closure**

Motion by Randels, second by Johnson to approve the Consent Agenda. The motion carried unanimously.

PUBLIC COMMENTS

The Board Chair opened the meeting to public comment at 2:43 p.m.

- Cass Peters asked how much time drivers are allotted for various things like accepting fares, bathroom breaks, wheelchair tie-down. She also commented that she does not appreciate having the public comment pushed down the agenda. In addition she stated that she doesn't like coming to these meetings because she perceives a great difference between audience and board members.
- Ron Gregory made several comments about First Amendment rights and asked several questions, requesting a reply from Chairman Sullivan. The questions regarded Jefferson Transit policy and procedure on posting public service announcements in transit buses.
- Larry Carter commented that local government is a "gangsta" and believes that the signs are silly.
- Bob Sokol commented that he was stopped at border checkpoints 3 times while traveling in New Mexico and Texas. He found all border patrol officers to be polite and courteous. He also commented that he has been an elected official in Jefferson County for 16 years and this is the first meeting in which an agenda was changed at the whim of the chair, resulting in an inconvenience for those attending the meeting.

- Carrie Pierce commented that the millennium bomber crossed the border in Port Angeles and does not think we should be debating this issue at all.
- Greg Durgan agreed with the previous comment, and noted the current situation in Mexico, saying we should do whatever we can to stop [lawlessness from crossing the borders].

Public comments were closed at 2:54 p.m.

NEW BUSINESS

a. Proposed Moratorium on Public Service Signs on Buses

This item was removed from the agenda by majority vote earlier in the meeting.

b. Approve Changes to CAC Bylaws

Linda Pfafman stated that the clauses that were unintentionally omitted resulted in an incorrect version of the bylaws which were submitted to the Board for approval in 2008. The Citizens Advisory Committee addressed the issue at the March meeting and voted for the changes proposed. Randels recommended a period after the word “appointment” in the first clause, excluding existing language that refers to extensions of the three year term.

Motion by Randels to amend the first clause under “Terms” in the CAC bylaws by adding a period after the word “appointment” and excluding the rest of the current language in that clause, and, if necessary to state categorically that the Authority Board believes in competition for open positions and no term limits.

Robinson stated that it is important to have a recruitment and appointment process that is consistent for a predictable rolling membership. How many time a CAC member becomes an issue of the CAC and board doing an effective recruitment process and finding new members to participate. She also recommended improving the clarity of the language in the second clause.

Motion by Austin, second by Robinson to table Randels’ motion. The motion carried unanimously.

STAFF REPORT

- Operations Report**
- Financial Report/ budget discussion**
- Hood Canal Bridge**

These reports were postponed until the next meeting.

MISCELLANEOUS/CORRESPONDENCE

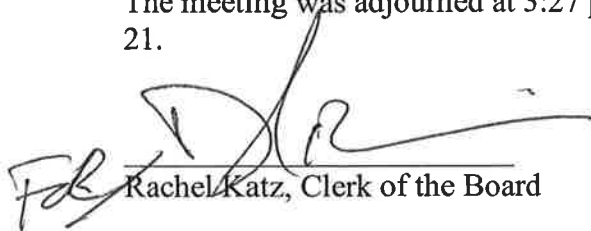
No discussion.

EXECUTIVE SESSION

The Board went into Executive Session at 3:00 p.m. to discuss the General Manager’s evaluation for approximately one-half hour. The Executive Session adjourned at 3:26 p.m. No action was taken.

ADJOURNMENT

The meeting was adjourned at 3:27 p.m. The next Regular Meeting will be held at 1:30 p.m., April 21.



Rachel Katz, Clerk of the Board

April 25, 2009
Date